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SUBJECT: INDIA: 2009 COUNTRY REPORTS ON TERRORISM

REF: STATE 109980

1.(SBU) The following is Mission India's submission for the 2009 Country Reports on Terrorism. Begin Text:

India remained one of the world's most terror-afflicted countries with over 1,000 deaths attributed to terrorist attacks in 2009, primarily in Kashmir, the Northeast, and the Maoist affected "Red Corridor." Although there were no large-scale assaults similar to the November 26, 2008 attacks in Mumbai (known as "26/11"), senior government officials warned that India remained vulnerable on the basis of the volume of credible threats the government continued to receive.

Some illustrative events:

--On January 1, the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) detonated several bombs in Guwahati, Assam, killing five people and injuring 50.

--On February 1, Maoists killed and mutilated the bodies of 15 police officers in Maharashtra's eastern district of Gadchiroli, looting guns and ammunition.

--On May 3, state police arrested approximately 20 sympathizers of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE) for attacking an army camp in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.

--On June 4, police arrested Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) operative Mohammad Omar Madini in New Delhi.

--On August 7, police arrested two suspected Hizb-ul-Mujahideen terrorists in New Delhi ahead of Independence Day celebrations.

--On October 7, Maoists beheaded Police Inspector Francis Induwar near Ranchi, Jharkhand, after the Indian Government refused to respond to demand for the release of three jailed leaders.

--On October 8, Maoists ambushed a police patrol in Maharashtra killing 17 police.

--On December 2, Maoists in West Bengal beheaded school teacher Satya Kinkar Hansda following his earlier abduction.

India continued to face persistent and significant external threats from groups including Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammad, and Harakat-ul-Jihad-i-Islami-Bangladesh. Although India received terrorist threats throughout the year, the government and media reported significant increases

in threat information over holidays and during elections. During the five week period of the national parliamentary elections, security concerns prompted the Indian Premier League of cricket to switch to a South African venue.

The state of Jammu and Kashmir, historically victim to the largest number of foreign terrorist attacks, saw casualties decline significantly from previous years. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) reported that 71 civilians and 52 members of the security forces were killed in terror-related violence in the state through November. Home Minister P. Chidambaram reported to Parliament in December that 700 foreign insurgents were active in the state, down from 800 earlier in the year.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told Parliament that Maoists/Naxalites (left-wing) insurgent groups represented the most significant threat to domestic security, accounting for 1,906 incidents of violence and 911 fatalities during the year. According to Home Minister Chidambaram, groups affiliated with the Communist Party of India (Maoist) had pockets of influence in 20 states, but were primarily active in 223 districts across eight states known as the "Red Corridor", comprised of West Bengal, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Karnataka. Maoists conducted numerous attacks against police and local government officials and bombed railways, killing civilians and disrupting services. No American citizens were victims of Maoist-related terrorism during the year. Foreign companies were reportedly targeted for extortion. In June, the central government banned Maoist groups under the

NEW DELHI 00002541 002 OF 002

Unlawful Activities Prevention Act of 1967. Chief Ministers from the most heavily Maoist-affected states agreed to cooperate with the MHA to launch joint operations along inter-state borders. MHA established counter-insurgency schools for police officials in Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, and Jharkhand. The central government deployed additional security forces in Chhattisgarh and Orissa, and announced plans to deploy to eight additional states by 2011.

Ethno-nationalist insurgent groups remained active, particularly in the Northeast. The ULFA, an internal terrorist group banned by India in 1990, continued a campaign of bombings in Assam state resulting in 27 fatalities this year. On December 2, security forces arrested ULFA Chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa on the Tripura-Bangladesh border. The Assam state government offered talks and free passage to ULFA leaders in a bid to make peace with the group. Home Minister Chidambaram reported to Parliament that the central government would agree to hold talks with the ULFA if the group "abjured violence."

Parliamentary elections in April and May returned the ruling Congress Party-led coalition government to power despite criticism that security and intelligence lapses failed to prevent the 26/11 attacks. The new government instituted several reforms designed to augment its existing security structures and to develop new capabilities. The MHA instituted regular meetings to improve communication among security agencies at the central and state levels, and assigned senior officers to review anti-terror and anti-Maoist operations. The government implemented tighter immigration controls, and in some areas it also implemented more effective border management through fencing and flood lighting, as well as a coastal security project that began issuing identity cards to villagers in some coastal areas. The MHA instituted a mega-city police training program and, in coordination with the Ministry of Defense (MOD), established assistance programs to train state police. The MHA increased resources for the National Security Guard (NSG), India's first responder paramilitary force, and established NSG hubs in Chennai, Kolkata, Hyderabad and Mumbai. It also reorganized the Multi-Agency Centers (MACs), tasked with collecting real-time intelligence and

coordinating among agencies, and began establishing subsidiary MACs in state capitals. The new National Investigation Agency created in the wake of the 26/11 attacks registered several cases in 2009, including one against David Headley, the alleged Lashkar-e-Tayyiba operative arrested in Chicago by the FBI. The trial of Ajmal Kasab, the alleged loan surviving gunman involved in the 26/11 attack, continued in Mumbai.

Amendments to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) came into force in June, furthering India's ability to combat the financing of terrorism. Indian officials participated in the South Asian Regional Conference for Countering Terrorist Financing in the Charitable Sector in April. The Asia/Pacific Group (APG) and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) conducted a joint mutual evaluation in December to evaluate India's compliance with global anti-money laundering and counter-terror finance standards in the context of India's candidacy for FATF membership. In December, India's Narcotics Control Bureau arrested Naresh Kumar Jain, allegedly a significant underground banker, as part of an operation to close a global network of illegal money transfers. India had only one prosecutor assigned to money laundering cases, and has pursued only seven cases for money laundering and none for terror finance.

In the wake of the 26/11 attack, the government increased its bilateral and multilateral cooperation with foreign governments on counterterrorism. India continued to lead the effort in the United Nations to finalize the Comprehensive Convention against International Terrorism. Senior Indian government officials, including the Home Minister, visited the United States to advance bilateral counterterrorism cooperation, culminating in the conclusion of the U.S.-India Counterterrorism Cooperation Initiative during Prime Minister Singh's official state visit in November.

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